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'Le Messenger' Published Once More [Article]

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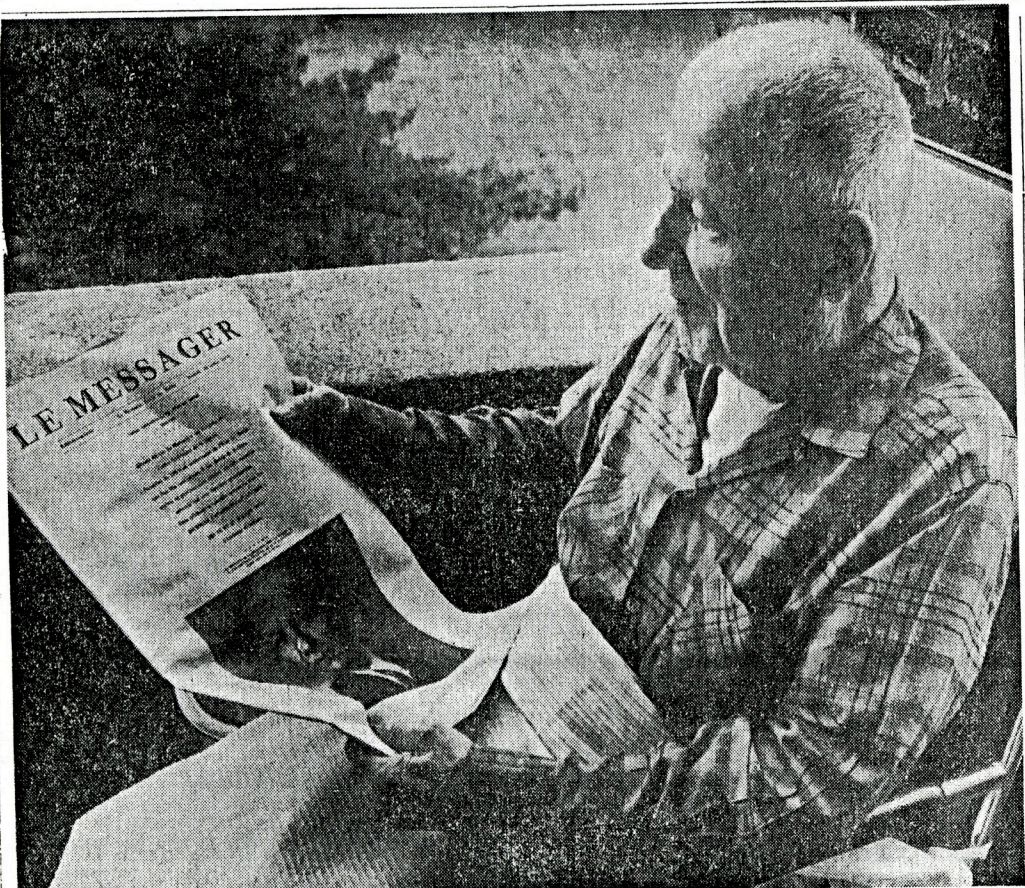
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ON EVENING JOURNAL

LEWISTON-AUBURN, MAINE, THURSDAY, JULY 16, 1970 LAST EDITION

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Staff Photo By Wordwell

A TIME TO REMEMBER—Omer Gauvin dedicated most of the years of his adult life to Lewiston's French-language newspaper and today there was no one in the community more deeply touched than he by the publication of the Sesquicentennial edition of his beloved paper.

The souvenir edition of the newspaper is the last ever to be published under the familiar masthead. Gauvin, an advertising salesman for the paper, was its oldest employee in terms of service when the paper ceased publication in 1966. He currently resides at the Marcotte Nursing Home.

A photograph of a younger Omer Gauvin appears in the issue in a picture of the paper's staff made in 1928. The handsome photograph on page one is of Jean Baptiste Couture, publisher of Le Messenger for more than 50 years, having acquired the paper in 1891.

SESQUI SOUVENIR EDITION

'Le Messenger' Published Once More

By MARGARET MITCHELL

Families of French ancestry have played a major role in the development of the state of Maine, and the Lewiston and Auburn community has for many years had the largest population of citizens of French background of any of the state's cities.

It follows then, that this group should make a contribution to the state's Sesquicentennial celebration, and outstanding among its efforts is the souvenir edition of 'Le Messenger,' Lewiston's French-language newspaper, which ceased publication four years ago.

The familiar masthead will be used no more — this is truly final edition for Le Messenger.

Founded 86 years ago by Dr. Louis J. Martel and J. D. Montmarquet, the newspaper was purchased in 1891 by Jean Baptiste Couture, a colorful and erudite gentleman, prominent in civic matters in this community all during his life. His picture (see photo) dominates page one of the re-born Le Messenger.

The paper has been continually cited in surveys and appraisals of foreign-language newspapers in the Northeast, as an outstanding paper.

It fell upon hard times in recent years and the large Lisbon Street plant which housed its operation during the Couture regime was turned over by the Couture heirs to a corporate group which continued its publication several years.

The photograph of Publisher Couture seen on the front page of the souvenir edition of the paper was taken in his late years.

The souvenir edition is printed partly in English, and most of its English copy relates a history of the community in which it circulated, and was widely read.

Philoen And Skinner

A former county clerk of courts, Attorney James E. Philoon of Auburn, offered his fine history of Androscoggin County for publication and another contemporary historian, Brig. Gen. Ralph B. Skinner of Auburn, has written of the Sesquicentennial's official program of events, within the county.

The program also is printed in French.

A lead article in the

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Le Messenger
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souvenir edition is a biography of J. B. Couture, who, had published the paper throughout most of its history. Another article includes brief biographical information concerning the people who were associated with it in its early years.

A feature article used a phrase often on the lips of the early Canadians coming to the twin cities. "Au moulin" referred to their employment in large numbers in the local textile industries.

An advertising salute is made by one of the textile firms to today's Canadians who come to the community today not as prospective employees but as vacationers and tourists.

Two of the state's leading Democratic political figures pose with their attractive families in the edition, and salute the project. They are Senator Edmund S. Muskie and Governor Kenneth M. Curtis, whose statements are printed in English and French.

Attorney General James S. Erwin, Republican candidate for governor, also offers his congratulations and best wishes, to the "Franco-American heritage."

Congressman William D. Hathaway (D) chose to make his message in French only as did Lewiston's official family, Mayor "Jean" B. Beliveau and councilmen. Lewiston's city, Auburn, and the are also represented.

The back page are shed some members of scoggin County.

Sesquicentennial Committee, which is headed by State Rep. Louis Jalbert, as chairman.

He expressed his appreciation to his committee and to numerous others who supported the effort, and speaks specifically of Miss Charlotte Michaud, one of the community's best known newswomen, Mrs. Anton E. Mainente of Auburn, associated with the paper in its last years, and Gen. Ralph B. Skinner, for the use of their "talents and experience."

Miss Michaud also makes acknowledgement of other residents of the community in her message of appreciation, written in both English and French.

The final edition of the city's French language newspaper is a splendid one — one which supports and lends credibility to the reputation it held in the community and afar for nearly a century.